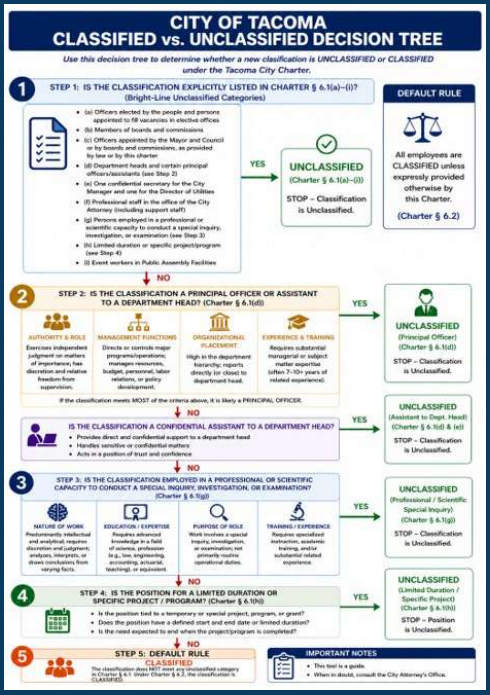
Civil Service Designation Review

City Council Meeting
June 9, 2026
Resolution No. 41931

Decision Tree



Step 1

CITY OF TACOMA
CLASSIFIED vs. UNCLASSIFIED DECISION TREE

Use this decision tree to determine whether a new clasification is UNCLASSIFIED or CLASSIFIED under the Tacoma City Charter.

1 STEP 1: IS THE CLASSIFICATION EXPLICITLY LISTED IN CHARTER § 6.1(a)–(i)? (Bright-Line Unclassified Categories)

- (a) Officers elected by the people and persons appointed to fill vacancies in elective offices
- (b) Members of boards and commissions
- (c) Officers appointed by the Mayor and Council or by boards and commissions, as provided by law or by this charter
- (d) Department heads and certain principal officers/assistants (see Step 2)
- (e) One confidential secretary for the City Manager and one for the Director of Utilities
- (f) Professional staff in the office of the City Attorney (including support staff)
- (g) Persons employed in a professional or scientific capacity to conduct a special inquiry, investigation, or examination (see Step 3)
- (h) Limited duration or specific project/program (see Step 4)
- (i) Event workers in Public Assembly Facilities

YES → **UNCLASSIFIED** (Charter § 6.1(a)–(i)) STOP – Classification is Unclassified.

↓ NO

DEFAULT RULE

All employees are CLASSIFIED unless expressly provided otherwise by this Charter.

(Charter § 6.2)

CITY OF Tacoma

Step 2

2 STEP 2: IS THE CLASSIFICATION A PRINCIPAL OFFICER OR ASSISTANT TO A DEPARTMENT HEAD? (Charter § 6.1(d))

AUTHORITY & ROLE	MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS	ORGANIZATIONAL PLACEMENT	EXPERIENCE & TRAINING
Exercises independent judgment on matters of importance; has discretion and relative freedom from supervision.	Directs or controls major programs/operations; manages resources, budget, personnel, labor relations, or policy development.	High in the department hierarchy; reports directly (or close) to department head.	Requires substantial managerial or subject matter expertise (often 7–10+ years of related experience).

If the classification meets MOST of the criteria above, it is likely a PRINCIPAL OFFICER.

YES → **UNCLASSIFIED** (Principal Officer) (Charter § 6.1(d)) STOP – Classification is Unclassified.

↓ NO

IS THE CLASSIFICATION A CONFIDENTIAL ASSISTANT TO A DEPARTMENT HEAD?

- Provides direct and confidential support to a department head
- Handles sensitive or confidential matters
- Acts in a position of trust and confidence

YES → **UNCLASSIFIED** (Assistant to Dept. Head) (Charter § 6.1(d) & (e)) STOP – Classification is Unclassified.

↓ NO

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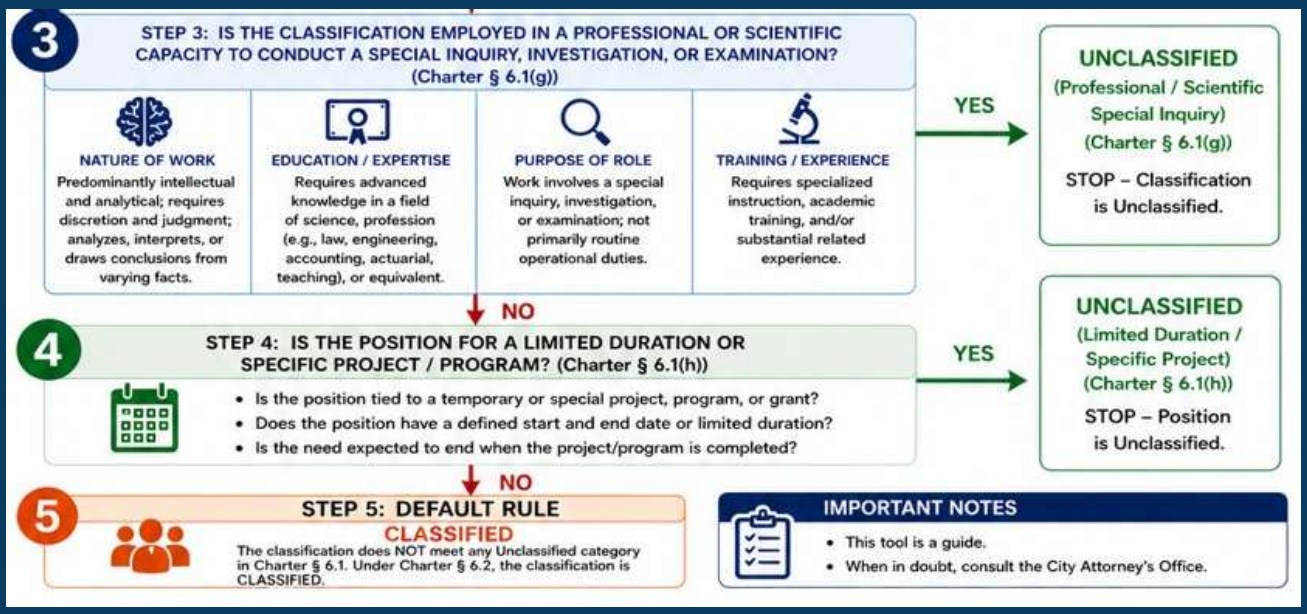
Step 3, 4, 5



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